

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ID

SUBJECT: PARTY POLITICS

1. SUMMARY: AFTER THE CONFLICTS OF THE PEOPLE'S CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY (MPR) GENERAL SESSION IN MARCH, PARTY POLITICS HAVE SUBSIDED DURING THE CURRENT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT (DPR) TO A LEVEL ACCEPTABLE TO ALL AIDES. WHILE THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN BUILDING UP THE IMAGE OF SUKARNO TO BOLSTER THE INDO-NESTIAN DEMOCRACY PARTY (PDI) AS A BALANCE TO THE MUSLIM-BACKED DEVELOPMENT UNITY PARTY (PPP), SOME DOUBTS HAVE ARISEN ABOUT THE WISDOM OF CONTINUING THIS CAMPAIGN. THE GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO BE RELAXING ITS CRACKDOWN ON MUSLIM DISSIDENTS, AND MINISTER OF RELIGION ALAMSYAH HAS REASSURED THE MUSLIMS BY HIS POSITION ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF JAVANESE MYSTICAL BELIEFS TO ISLAM. THE PPP IS STILL EXPERIENCING SOME INTERNAL DIFFERENCES BUT HOPES TO HOLD A NATIONAL PARTY CONFERENCE LATE THIS YEAR. BOTH THE PPP AND THE PDI ARE ATTEMPTING TO CHANGE DPR REGULATIONS TO PERMIT PARLIAMENT TO PLAY A MORE INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN GOVERNMENT.
END SUMMARY.

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2. RECENT COVERSTIONS WITH LEADING PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE DEVELOPMENT UNITY PARTY (PPP) AND THE INDONESIAN DEMOCRACY PARTY (PDI) INDICATE THAT PART POLITICS HAVE SETTLED DOWN TO A SEASON OF SLOW MANEUVERING AS THE DPR MOVES THROUGH ITS FIRST POST-PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION SESSION. CURRENT EFFORTS TO REHABILITATE THE HISTORICAL POSITION OF FORMER PRESIDENT SUKARNO (REFURBISHING HIS GRAVE, AUTHORIZ-

ING ARTICLES AND BOOKS ABOUT HIM, ALLOWING HIS PORTRAIT TO BE COMMERCIALIZED) ARE VIEWED BY MEMBERS OF BOTH PARTIES AS A POLITICAL MOVE BY THE GOVERNMENT TO BUILD UP THE PDI AND FORMER SUKARNO ENTHUSIASTS AS A COUNTERWEIGHT TO THE PPP. THIS, THEY SAY, WOULD GIVE THE PRO-GOVERNMENT GOLKAR AND ABRI (ARMED FORCES) FACTIONS IN PARLIAMENT THE OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY OFF A STRONGER PDI AGAINST THE PPP. THEY BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS CAMPAIGN, WHICH MANY SEE AS THE WORK OF ALI MURTOPO, MAY BE DIFFICULT TO CONTROL. THE BUPATI OF MAGELANG TOLD US THIS WEEK, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT HE IS HAVING DIFFICULTY KEEPING THE LID ON NEWLY-EXUBERANT SUKARNOISTS IN HIS DISTRICT. THE GOVERNMENT SBANNING LAST WEEK OF A BOOK BILLED AS SUKARNO'S TESTAMENT BECAUSE IT DID NOT HAVE THE APPROVAL OF THE SUKARNO FAMILY ALSO SUGGESTS, OBSERVERS SAY, THAT THE RESURRECTION OF BUNG KARNO MAY BE PROCEEDING FASTER AND FARTHER THAN THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED.

3. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE SEEMS TO BE CALMING DOWN. PPP LEADERS SEE THE GOI RELAXING ITS SEARCH FOR MUSLIM RADICALS AND SUBVERSIVES. THERE HAVE BEEN NO NEW ARRESTS OF PROMINENT MUSLIM POLITICAL LEADERS AS DISSIDENTS FOR SOME TIME. A POPULAR LECTURER AT THE BANDUNG TECHNICAL INSTITUTE (ITB) WAS PICKED UP IN LATE MAY FOR ACTIVITIES CONNECTED WITH THE POLITICALLY-CHARGED SALMAN MOSQUE IN BANDUNG, ONE OF A SMALL NUMBER

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OF ISOLATED ARRESTS ON SPECIFIC CHARGES OR SUSPICIONS, RATHER THAN ANY NEW PHASE OF A MORE BROADLY BASED CRACKDOWN. ONE PPP LEADER CONSIDERS THAT THE ARRESTS SEVERAL WEEKS AGO OF JOURNALIST MAHBUB DJUNAIDI, UNIVERSITY RECTOR SUNY, AND WAR HERO BUNG TOMO WERE MEANT AS A WARNING, HOPEFULLY SUFFICIENT IN INTENSE, TO ALL LESSER LIGHTS AMONG INDONESIAN JOURNALISTS, ACADEMICS, AND VETERANS TO REFRAIN FROM DISSIDENT ACTIVITY.

4. MUSLIMS SEEM RELIEVED THAT MINISTER OF RELIGION ALAMSYAH HAS NOT BEEN PUSHING STRONGLY FOR THE IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION IN LAW OR REGULATIONS OF THE MPR RESOLUTION ON PANCASILA WITH ITS REFERENCES TO JAVANESE MYSTICAL BELIEFS (KEPERCAYAAN). ON THE CONTRARY, ALAMSYAH'S STATEMENTS JUNE 6 THAT MUSLIMS WHO JOIN MYSTICAL GROUPS ARE NOT NECESSARILY ABANDONING ISLAM SINCE KEPERCAYAAN IS NOT A RELIGION, AND THAT MUSLIM CLERGYMEN AND ELDERS HAVE A DUTY TO GUIDE THEIR FOLLOWERS TO THE PROPER WAYS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE, WOULD SEEM TO MAKE IT UNLIKELY THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS ANY IMMEDIATE INTENTION OF USING THE PANCASILA RESOLUTION AS A WEDGE TO ENHANCE THE STATUS OF NOMINAL MUSLIMS AT THE EXPENSE OF ORTHODOX ISLAM.

A COMMITTEE OF SEVEN ELDER STATESMEN HEADED BY RULAN ABDULGANI APPOINTED TO RECOMMEND ACTION ON THE PANCASILA RESOLUTION HAS YET TO SUBMIT A REPORT, BUT THE PPP HOPES TO HAVE ANY RECOMMENDATION SUBMITTED TO THE DPR FOR DEBATE, AND APPROVAL BEFORE IT BECOMES LAW.

5. THE PPP IS REPORTEDLY STILL SUFFERING SOME INTERNAL TENSIONS, WITH FORMER MEMBERS OF THE NU PARTY ADVOCATING A STRONGER LINE OF OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT POLICIES THAN THE MEMBERS OF THE SMALLER MUSLIM PARTIES IN THE PPP COALITION. THE LATTER, ACCORDING TO ONE PROMINENT EX-NU MEMBER, HAVE TO BE RESTRAINED FROM EAGERLY ACCEPTING ANYTHING THE GOVERNMENT OFFERS. THE PARTY PLANS TO HAVE A NATIONAL CONFERENCE LATE THIS YEAR, AND MANY PARTY

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MEMBERS ARE REPORTED TO BE RESOLVED TO THROW OUT PARTY CHAIRMAN IDHAM CHALID AND OTHERS WHO DID NOT SUPPORT THE PPP WALKOUTS AT THE MPR SESSION IN MARCH. SINCE THEIR OUSTER COULD ONLY PRODUCE A MORE DISSIDENT PARTY LEADERSHIP, THE GOVERNMENT MAY BE RELUCTANT TO AUTHORIZE A

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PARTY CONFERENCE AT THIS TIME.

6. BOTH PPP AND PDI LEADERS ARE HOPEFUL THAT THEY CAN PERSUADE THE TWO GOVERNMENT FACTIONS IN PARLIAMENT TO CHANGE THE STANDING ORDERS OF THAT BODY TO ALLOW DRAFT LAWS TO BE PROPOSED BY PARLIAMENT ITSLEF WITH THE SUPPORT OF JUST ONE OF THE FOUR FACTIONS. THE PREVIOUS REGULATIONS REQUIRED TWO FACTIONS TO PROPOSE A LAW, AND ABRI AND GOLKAR ARE OPPOSED TO ANY CHANGE. ALSO AT ISSUE IS A PROPOSAL BY THE PPP AND THE PDI TO GIVE DPR-PROPOSED BILLS EQUAL STATUS WITH GOVERNMENT DRAFTS SO THAT THEY ARE NOT REQUIRED TO UNDERGO PRIOR SCREENING BY THE ENTIRE PARLIAMENT.

7. THE TWO PARTIES COMPLAIN THAT THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF PARLIAMENT ALSO WORKS AGAINST EFFECTIVE ACTION BY THE DPR IN INVESTIGATING NATIONAL PROBLEMS. ATTEMPTS TO SEND MPS TO INVESTIGATE A FAMINE AREA IN WEST JAVA LAST YEAR WERE REPORTEDLY OBSTRUCTED WHEN THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE DPR REFUSED TO APPROVA OFFICIAL TRAVEL EXPENSES INVOLVED. ACCORDING TO A PDI LEADER, THIS IS THE RESULT OF A 1977 DECREE PLACING THE SECRETARY GENERAL UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MINISTER OF STATE/STATE SECRETARY RATHER THAN THE DPR LEADERSHIP.

8. COMMENT: WHILE THE PPP AND PDI COTINUE TO HAVE THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS FACTIONS IN PARLIAMENT, TENSION HAS DECREASED MARKEDLY SINCE THE MPR SESSION. THE PPP MEMBES OF PARLIAMENT ARE SUSPICIOUS OF CURRENT GOVERNMENT POLITICAL GAMBITS, BUT THEY SHOW LITTLE CURRENT FEAR OF ANY DRASIC MOVES AGAINST THE MUSLIMS OR THE PARTY ITSELF. THE REHABILITATION OF SUKARNO MAY CAUSE MORE TROUBLE THAN IT IS WORTH AT THE MOMENT, AND WE DO NOT EXPECT TO SEE THE GOI PUSH IT ANY HARDER IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS AT LEAST.

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